

is not only useless abroad but fatal at home. The change from feudal to modern methods of land-tenure and field labour, more advanced than any other of the many changes in process, convulses society, and in one short but terrible crisis almost wrecks the State. In religion, the inadequacy of the Mediaeval Church to English needs is apparent in a hundred ways, and a great attempt is made to answer the call for something new. In the succeeding century all the movements for change were stopped, except as to land and labour, where the process went on silently but steadily. Henry the Fifth galvanised medievalism into life. He maintained for a short while the old constitutional monarchy and the rights of the Commons against the nobles; he reconquered France; he aided the Church to crush Lollardry. Little did all his efforts avail. Woeful indeed, and barren of things good, were the reigns of his successors. The history of the fifteenth century in England brings to mind the words of Carlyle. 'How often, in former ages, by eternal Creeds, eternal Forms of Government and the like, has it been attempted, fiercely enough, and with destructive violence, to chain the Future under the Past; and say to the Providence whose ways are mysterious and through the great deep: Hitherto shalt thou come, but no farther! A wholly insane attempt; and for man himself, could it prosper, the fright-fullest of all enchantments, a very Life-in-Death.'¹ In the end the enchantment was broken, and the Age of Wycliffe found the answer to its questions in the Tudor Monarchy and the English Reformation.

¹*Miscellaneous Works*, iv. 33.